[26th November 1949

APPENDIX IV.

[Vide answer to starred question No. 60 asked by Sri R. Suryanarayana Rao at the meeting of the Legislative Council held on 26th November 1949, page 621 supra.]

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS.

EDUCATION AND PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT.

PRESS NOTE NO. 29.

Dated Fort St. George, the 16th February 1949.

Certain reports, critical of the administration of the General Hospital, Madras, and the Barnard Institute of Radiology have appeared in the Press. These reports seem to be related to the interest that Government have been recently taking to investigate and improve the administration of these institutions which has suffered from the strain of the war years, particularly the shortage of main-power, commensurate with the increase in work.

In respect of the General Hospital, the attention of Government was drawn by the Accountant-General to the various financial irregularities in the accounts. On orders of Government these irregularities were investigated in detail by an experienced retired Assistant Accounts Officer on whose report the Surgeon-General has been directed to frame charges against the staff and officers responsible, and to cause corrections and improvements to be made in the procedure and discharge of the work. The Government have further directed that investigation should be made in other City Hospitals too, which may be subject to the same irregularities, in order that remedial action may be taken.

In respect of the general administration, Hon'ble Dr. Rajan, Minister for Food, made an inspection in May 1948 of the various departments. The defects found by him which relate to sanitation, convenience and comfort of patients, inadequacy of staff and accommodation, are the result of gradual accumulation for years. Action in respect of every detail noted by Hon'ble Dr. Rajan has been initiated and has been partly completed. Government are also considering the appointment of non-official visitors to these and other Government Hospitals with a view to organize the intelligent public vigilance, so that due and prompt attention is paid to the proper administration of medical relief to the public.

Hon'ble Dr. Rajan also inspected the Barnard Institute. His general finding was that complaints in respect of the Institute were largely due to jealousies of competitive practice. The various suggestions made by him on technical matters have been examined in respect of the action possible. The question of increasing the accommodation and altering the arrangements for the comfort of patients is also actively under consideration. This institution which is being run in conformity with standards of other Institutions in the world has been improving both in respect of its income and the scope and size of the relief provided. Its accounts which were thoroughly checked by the Assistant Accounts Officer

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have been reported to be satisfactory. In connection with the Radium needles on which there has been some uninformed comment, it has been found that the quality of these needles was duly tested on their receipt. In respect of those needles which were found to be different from specification, the suppliers in New York were promptly addressed. On supply of photographs of six of the needles, the company has agreed to re-test them. The company has also agreed to consider the photographs of other defective needles. This is entirely a matter of a contractual nature in which there has been no delay or default in the action taken by the officers of the Institute.

J. M. LOBO PRABHU,
Joint Secretary to Government.

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS.

PUBLIC WORKS (INFORMATION AND PUBLICITY) DEPARTMENT.

PRESS NOTE NO. 179.

Dated Fort St. George, the 7th October 1949.

The Government have gone very carefully into the case relating to the supply of defective radium needles to the Barnard Institute of Radiology, Government General Hospital, Madras, by an American firm, at is has given rise to a number of insinuation in certain sections of the Press. They find that there was no question of any part of the transaction having been improper or having been sought to be hushed up by the officers concerned but that the supplies made were not according to the specification and that every effort is being made to get the needles rectified. The American firm which supplied the needles has agreed to rectify the defective needles and after the first lot has been rectified and tested, the other needles will be sent for rectification. Although clinically the use of some of the needles has not disclosed any ill-effects, the Government have directed the withdrawal of the needles from use pending their rectification according to specifications.

[*Issued by the Director of Information and Publicity* (*in-charge*).]